MINISTRY OF HEALTH

I

Borough of Okehampton

ANNUAL REPORT

On the Health
Of the District
For the Year
1967

PRESENTED BY

Medical Officer of Health

AND

The Public Health Inspector and Surveyor

T. Jordan, Printer, Okehampton

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HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEES

Chairman:

COUNCILLOR W. T. LETCHFORD

Vice-Chairman:

COUNCILLOR E. H. RAE

Members:

ALDERMEN: F. A. PARTRIDGE, C. E. W. WHITE

COUNCILLORS: A. J. CROCKER, M. J. CUNLIFFE, M. G. R. DANIEL, R. GEE, C. G. JONES, P. N. SMART, R. R. TAYLOR, P. D. WOODGATE

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

Medical Officer of Health

MARY E. BUDDING, M.B., B.Ch., B.Sc., D.P.H.

Public Health Inspector and Surveyor

T. F. BENNETT, M.A.P.H.I., A.I.P.H.E.

Assistants to Public Health Inspector and Surveyor

E. J. N. FURSE
N. F. WESTON

Clerk to the Medical Officer of Health

MISS E. M. HAMBLY S.R.N. (part-time)
D.C.C. Clinic, 70 Plymouth Road, Tavistock (Tavistock 2617).

BOROUGH OF OKEHAMPTON

Annual Report on the Health of the Area during 1967

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

I beg to present, herewith, the Annual Report on the Health of the Borough during 1967, drawn up in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Health Circular 1/68 dated January, 1968. Included in the Report is the report of your Public Health Inspector and Surveyor.

There have been three amenities added to those already existing in the Borough i.e. the opening of the new very fine swimming pool, the inauguration of the highly successful Meals-on-Wheels Service operated by the Women's Royal Voluntary Service, and the commencement of the Cervical Cytology Clinic in the Health Centre for the early detection of cervical cancer.

On the other hand, no progress has been made towards the provision of an adequate modern Sewage Disposal Works, as I considered it an inauspicious time to press the Ministry (on Public Health grounds) for this, in view of the economic situation prevailing. This matter will be pursued as soon as the time is ripe for success. Also there was cause for complaint regarding the refuse tip, particularly at the time of the foot and mouth disease epidemic in other parts of the country. This instigated the burning of the tip which has been a satisfactory solution to the problem. In passing it may be noted that this refuse tip would be in the catchment area if a reservoir should be situated at Gorhuish.

The estimated population mid-year was the same as in 1966 i.e. remains static. The Standardised Birth Rate of 14.2 per 1,000 population is lower than last year's (17.8) and than the National Rate of 17.2. However, the Standardised Death Rate of 11.2 per 1,000 population is lower than that of 1966 (11.7) and is the same as the National Rate of 11.2. As expected, the majority of deaths (27 out of 64) were due to cardio-vascular diseases.

Relatively few Infectious Diseases were notified, measles being the most prevalent, and there were no cases of poliomyelitis, diphtheria or food poisoning.

You are to be congratulated on your efforts to bring to the notice of the public (including Youth organisations) the dangers of 'Exposure on Dartmoor' by purchasing the leaflet "Exposure" B.M.C. 380, 1964, for distribution to hotels, etc., and exhibition on notice boards, following the death from exposure of a boy Cadet on Dartmoor. Unfortunately, this was followed by two more deaths from exposure occurring in Cadet Officers later in the year.

The general health of the Borough has been good during 1967.

Finally, I should like to thank the Mayor, Aldermen, Councillors and Staff, for their continued consideration and support.

I am, Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

Your obedient servant,

MARY E. BUDDING,

Medical Officer of Health

SECTION 'A'

General Statistics

Area (statute acres)	786
Population – 1951 census	3,899
Population – 1961 census	3,864
Estimated home population – mid 1967 ...	3,810
Number of inhabited dwellings	1,420
Rateable Value	£118,337
Product of the Penny Rate	£469
Loan debt	£328,140

Vital Statistics

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
LIVE BIRTHS			
Legitimate	21	23	44
Illegitimate	3	1	4
			48
DEATHS	28	36	64

		England and Wales
LIVE BIRTHS		
Number	48	
Crude Rate per 1,000 population ...	12.6	17.2
Standardised Birth Rate	14.2	
ILLEGITIMATE LIVE BIRTHS		
(per cent of total live births)	8.3%	
STILL BIRTHS		
Number	2	
Rate per 1,000 total live and still births	40	14.8
TOTAL LIVE AND STILL BIRTHS	50	
INFANT DEATHS (deaths under 1 year) ...	1	
INFANT MORTALITY RATES		
Infant deaths per 1,000 total live births	21	18.3
Legitimate infant deaths per 1,000 legitimate live births	22.7	
Illegitimate infant deaths per 1,000 illegitimate live births	Nil	
NEONATAL MORTALITY RATES (deaths under 4 weeks per 1,000 total live births)	20.8	12.5
EARLY NEONATAL MORTALITY RATES (deaths under 1 week per 1,000 total live births)	20.8	10.8
PERINATAL MORTALITY RATE (still births and deaths under one week per 1,000 total live and still births)	60	25.4
MATERNAL MORTALITY (including abortion)		
Number of deaths	Nil	
Rate per 1,000 total live and still births	—	

DEATHS

Number	64	
Crude death rate per 1,000 population	16.8	11.2
Standardised death rate	11.2	

POPULATION

Year	*Mid-Year Population*	*Birth Rate*	*Death Rate*
1963	3,800	11.0	19.4
1964	3,840	16.4	23.5
1965	3,840	14.3	21.4
1966	3,810	15.7	19.2
1967	3,810	12.6	16.8

The chief causes of death were as follows:

Tuberculosis, respiratory	1
Cancer	10
Vascular lesions of the Nervous System	11
Coronary Disease	14
Other Heart Diseases	8
Other Circulatory Diseases	5
Pneumonia	3
Bronchitis	2
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	2
Nephritis and Nephrosis	1
Other defined and ill defined diseases	5
All other accidents	2

AGE AT DEATH TABLE

Age	*Male*	*Female*
Under 4 weeks	–	1
4 weeks and under 1 year	–	–
1 –	–	–
5 –	–	1
15 –	1	–
25 –	–	–
35 –	–	–
45 –	2	1
55 –	2	2
65 –	8	6
75 and over	15	25

SECTION 'B'

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

1. Hospitals

There are two hospitals in the town, The Memorial Hospital (including maternity beds) and the Castle Hospital (for chronic sick and Geriatric cases). Both of these serve the town and also the large rural area outside the town.

2. County Council Health Services

Under the National Health Service Act, 1946, the County Council provides the following services (based largely on the Okehampton Health Centre (Okehampton 731) in the grounds of the Memorial Hospital, also providing accommodation for the General Practitioners in the town):
Domiciliary Midwifery, Home nursing, Health Visitors, supervisory care of expectant and nursing mothers and children under five, School Medical Service, Home Help Services, Chiropody, Occupation Therapy, Speech Therapy, Dental service for children up to school leaving age, expectant and nursing mothers; Mental Health Service, Vaccination and immunisation procedures. A Cervical Cytology Clinic for early detection of cervical cancer was started during 1967.

The Ambulance Service is run under delegated powers by the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, providing a 24 hour cover for the whole district.

3. Meals on Wheels

This service was inaugurated in early 1967 by the W.R.V.S. and during this time 1,850 meals were served to 43 people (3 husbands and wives, 6 men and 34 women). At present meals cooked in a mobile kitchen are delivered twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It is hoped that if better kitchen facilities can be made available the service may be extended during 1968 to possibly Folly Gate, North Tawton, Hatherleigh and Bridestowe.

4. War Memorial Hospital

During the year, 87 babies were born in the hospital:

Okehampton Borough	29
Okehampton Rural District	51
Other districts	7
	87

60% of the total births which occurred in the Okehampton Borough took place in the War Memorial Hospital.

5. Laboratory Services

Bacteriological examinations of specimens and of samples of milk, water ice cream, etc., are carried out at the Public Health Laboratory at Exeter, and any chemical analyses by the Public Analyst at Exeter.

6. Health Centre, Okehampton

In addition to the Services mentioned in 2 above, the Orthopaedic Clinic is held each Monday on the premises.

7. Mass Radiography Unit

The Unit continues to visit every other week, as advertised in the local press. 396 persons attended for Chest X-Rays as follows:

G.P. Referrals	167
Tuberculin Positive Reactors	21
Contacts to Tuberculin Positive Reactors	3
Students	5
Hospital Staff	3
Schools Staff	27
General Public	169
Chest Clinic Follow-ups	1
	396

No case of active pulmonary tuberculosis was found, and the 34 abnormalities discovered were as follows:

DEFECTS ON X-RAY

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
Tuberculosis – under observation ...	1	1	2
Tuberculosis – healed	2	8	10
Cardio-Vascular disease – acquired ...	1	1	2
Pulmonary infections, including all types of Pneumonia and Fungus Infections	1	–	1
Bronchitis and Emphysema	5	1	6
Abnormalities of the diaphragm and Oesophagus	–	1	1
Other abnormalities of no clinical significance	6	5	11
Failed to attend for further X-Rays or clinical examination	–	1	1
TOTALS:	16	18	34

SECTION 'C'

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water Supply Sources

Mr. E. A. Robb, the Chief Engineer of the North Devon Water Board, has supplied the following information of his Board's progress during the year:

OKEHAMPTON BOROUGH

The supply for the Borough is obtained from Black-a-Ven and Red-a-Ven intakes with treatment at Brackentor Works for the central and western areas, and from Taw marsh with treatment at Belstone Works for the eastern area of the Borough. During times of low yield from the Taw marsh source, it has been found necessary to serve the whole Borough from Brackentor works.

Several mains renewals were carried out and distribution mains laid to the new developments which have now been erected.

Work has proceeded on restoring the distribution system which is now on a satisfactory footing.

Chemical and bacteriological samples have been taken throughout the period and were satisfactory at all times.

Rainfall Figures

Rainfall figures for the past five years as follows:

	1967	*1966*	*1965*	*1964*	*1963*
Cranmere ...	98.88	92.75	97.95	68.00	87.93
Newbridge ...	83.57	68.30	75.60	53.50	65.60
Filter Station ...	64.52	61.43	59.02	41.26	54.39
Pleasure Gardens	61.29	60.17	62.03	41.57	54.55
Dry Days (no rain)	139	130	147	178	156

The driest months were April, June and August and the wettest October, February and May and the heaviest rainfalls were 2.12″ July 22nd, 1.40″ February 22nd and 1.76″ October 16th.

Sewerage

The end of the year finds the Borough still not provided with a modern means of sewage disposal and in view of the current restriction on capital expenditure it is difficult to foresee any progress in this direction within the near future.

In previous annual reports mention has been made of this lack of modern sewage disposal arrangements and the continual growth of the town makes this facility all the more desirable. However, further approaches have been made to the Ministry during the year and representations will continue to be made.

Public Conveniences.

During the year a new toilet block has been provided in Market Street utilising a portion of the former cattle market premises.

These modern facilities will be of particular benefit to visitors to the town, being sited near to the principal car park.

Rodent Control

Treatments of the sewer systems have again been carried out by the Council's staff in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food. In this way effective control of rat infestation in the sewers is ensured and very little infestation has in fact been found during the year.

Five complaints have been received and dealt with.

Refuse Collection and Disposal

The domestic refuse collection arrangements in the Borough continue to operate satisfactorily providing for one collection per week from all domestic premises.

At the end of the year, due to the National outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease the disposal of all the refuse at the refuse tip by burning was found to be the most effective way of minimising any potential danger from this source and it is hoped that burning will continue. Control of the refuse tip can be more effectively carried out when refuse is burnt and the quantities of covering material required are thereby considerably reduced.

Frequent inspections continue to be made and very few problems from either rat or fly infestation have been encountered during the year, however, periodic test treatments are carried out as a precautionary measure.

Inspection of the District and Public Health Services

The number of complaints regarding public health matters received, recorded and dealt with during the year was 17.

The following table sets out the inspections carried out during the year.

	Number of Inspections	*Number of Informal Notices Served*	*Number of Informal Notices Complied With*
Housing	145	6	6
Drainage	46	4	4
Food Premises	25	4	4
Public Conveniences	39	–	–
Sewerage	79	–	–
Water Supply	4	–	–
Rivers	6	–	–
Refuse Disposal	64	–	–
Rodent Control	32	–	–
Moveable dwellings	5	–	–
Schools	1	1	1
Infectious Diseases	–	–	–
Petroleum Acts	16	3	2
Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act	16	4	2
Factories	22	1	1
Miscellaneous	238	–	–
TOTAL	738	23	20

Factories Act, 1961

Details of inspections carried out in accordance with the Factories Act, 1961 are set out in the tables which follow.

INSPECTIONS FOR PURPOSES OF PROVISIONS AS TO HEALTH
(including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors).

Premises	*Number on Register*	*Inspections*	*Number of*	
			Written Notices	*Occupiers Prosecuted*
Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	3	2	–	–
Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	40	20	2	–
Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers premises)	9	3	1	–
TOTAL	52	25	3	–

2. CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars	*Number of cases in which defects were found*				*Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted*
	Found	*Remedied*	*Referred*		
			to H.M. Inspector	*by H.M. Inspector*	
Want of Cleanliness ...	–	–	–	–	–
Unreasonable Temperature	–	–	–	–	–
Inadequate Ventilation ...	–	–	–	–	–
Ineffective drainage of floors ...	–	–	–	–	–
Sanitary Conveniences:					
(*a*) Insufficient	–	–	–	–	–
(*b*) Unsuitable or defective	4	2	–	1	–
(*c*) Not separate for the sexes	–	–	–	–	–
Other offences (not including outwork)	–	–	–	–	–
TOTAL	4	2	–	1	–

3. Out-Work (Sections 133 and 134)

Nature of Work	Section 133			Section 134		
	Number of Out-Workers in August list required by Section 133 (1) (c)	*Number of cases of default in sending lists to Council*	*Number of prosecutions for failure to supply lists*	*Number of instances of work in unwholesome premises*	*Notices served*	*Prosecutions*
Wearing Apparel (Making, etc.)	–	–	–	–	–	–

SECTION 'D'

HOUSING

Town and Country Planning and Building Regulations

Applications for permission to develop under the Town and Country Planning Acts, Advertisement Regulations, Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act, 1960 and the Building Regulations have been received over the past twelve months as follows:

Alterations and Conversions	24
Advertisement Signs	9
Public Works	3
New Dwellings	12
Garages	16
Caravan Sites	1 (renewal)
Industrial and Shop Premises	19

Of the above, 6 applications have been refused.

Private Enterprise

Six new houses were erected by private enterprise during the year.

Improvement Grants

Four applications for Standard Improvement Grants under the provisions of the House Purchase and Housing Act, 1959 as amended by the Housing Act, 1961 and 1964 were received and approved. Seven have been completed during the year.

Council Housing

New Houses

During the year all the houses on the Pikes Mead Estate at High Street, totalling 34 houses, together with garages and car parking spaces, have been completed and brought into occupation.

Negotiations have continued throughout the year for a scheme to provide an Estate of 75 houses with garages and car parking spaces at Moyses Meadow, High Street. The negotiations with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and with the prospective Contractors, Messrs. Selleck Nicholls Williams Ltd., have reached, at the end of the year, a fairly advanced stage and it is anticipated work will commence during the coming year.

Maintenance and Repairs

Normal maintenance and repairs have been carried out during the year and all except electrical repairs have been carried out by the Council's maintenance staff. No particular problems have been encountered and all repairs have been minor in character.

Repairs are carried out as speedily as possible and during the year 320 reports were received and/or dealt with.

SECTION 'E'

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Food Premises

The number of food premises falling within the provisions of the Food Hygiene Regulations are as follows:

Grocers	12
Greengrocers	6
Confectioners	4
Bread and Cakes	4
Meat Shops	8
Fish Shops	2
Milk Shops	1
Dairies	1
Hotels and Bars	9
Cafes	6

Iced Cream and Preserved Foods

The number of premises registered under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955 is as follows:

Ice Cream	25
Preparation or manufacture of Sausage or potted or pressed, pickled or preserved food intended for sale	6

Unsound Food

Three certificates for unsound food were issued during the year and 36 lbs. of miscellaneous food stuffs condemned.

Slaughterhouses

There are now no slaughterhouses being used in the Borough.

Slaughter of Animals Act, 1958

Applications were received for licences or renewal of licences to slaughter, and in all 4 cases were granted.

Poultry Packing Premises

There are 2 premises within the Borough where Poultry is slaughtered and processed.

SECTION 'F'

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES

Tuberculosis

One new case of Pulmonary Tuberculosis was notified and this same patient died, therefore the Register remains as in 1966, with only nine cases remaining:

Pulmonary		*Non-Pulmonary*
Male	*Female*	
6	3	NIL

Infectious Diseases Notified by Medical Practitioners

	Measles		*Acute Pneumonia*	*Whooping Cough*
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Male*
Under 1	3	1		
1	2	2		
2	6	3		
3	4	2		
5–9	20	19		
10–14	3	1	1	
15–24	–	1		
25+	–	–		
Unknown age	4	5		1
TOTAL	42	34	1	1

Infectious Diseases Notified by School Authorities

22 cases of measles were notified by Okehampton County Primary School.

Food Poisoning

There were no cases notified.

Smallpox Contact

One (unvaccinated) from abroad, was visited regularly until the danger period was over.